

Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Conversation with John J. McCloy on the Cuban Missile Crisis

Date: January 9, 1984

Place: Telecon (Washington-New York)


President Kennedy reached McCloy at the airport in Frankfurt and called him back to the United States to conduct negotiations with First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov. I asked why he had been brought back, since Stevenson was in New York and Ball and Gilpatric as well. McCloy said that "Washington" believed Stevenson was "too soft" for the negotiations and wanted McCloy to brace him [or to provide reassurance to those who may have held that view of Stevenson]. McCloy commented: "Actually, he [Stevenson] was tougher than I was. He was indignant at Gromyko having lied about no missiles in Cuba."

Kuznetsov arranged the removal of missiles on Soviet ships, including arrangements for the Soviet ships to remove tarpaulins from the missiles so they could be observed, and calling back some ships that initially didn't remove the tarpaulins.

Kuznetsov negotiated [a holding action] until Mikoyan could get Castro's agreement to remove the IL-28 bombers.

Kuznetsov wanted to work out a [U.S.] no-invasion pledge, but McCloy said he was not empowered to do that. It was later negotiated on by others [but with no agreement reached].

Kuznetsov, with [Ambassador Valerian] Zorin present, told McCloy: "We [the Soviet Union] will fulfill our agreement, but never again will we let ourselves be put in such a position." I asked whether he had referred to a military buildup as the way to prevent such a recurrence; McCloy said he had not. Kuznetsov did not further explain the meaning of his comment.


Raymond L. Garthoff